

For centuries hardened fighting men have clashed swords in anger here. Suleiman the Magnificent. Napoleon Bonaparte. Russell Crowe.

As you sip your coffee in one of many cafes in the ancient harbour, the laid back atmosphere is warm and welcoming. But these feelings are a stark contrast to the fear and ferocity of the bloody conflicts that have echoed around its rugged rocks and beaches. Would-be invader Suleiman sent a terrifying armada of 181 Ottoman ships, armed to the teeth, but was sent home defeated. Two centuries later it took Napoleon 54,000 soldiers to conquer the fortress walls. (Overkill surely against this tiny island archipelago). But the bravery of this nation has never been in doubt. As your waiter will surely proudly confirm, after World War Two, the entire nation - yes every man and woman - was awarded the George Cross for their determined and gritty resistance. Invasions today resound to the sounds of mock fights and 'cut!' as movie directors retell old stories. So when you walk along those hot dusty paths, to the spectacular locations where Brad Pitt filmed Troy, you walk in the footsteps of heroes old and new. **WHERE IS THIS PLACE?**

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